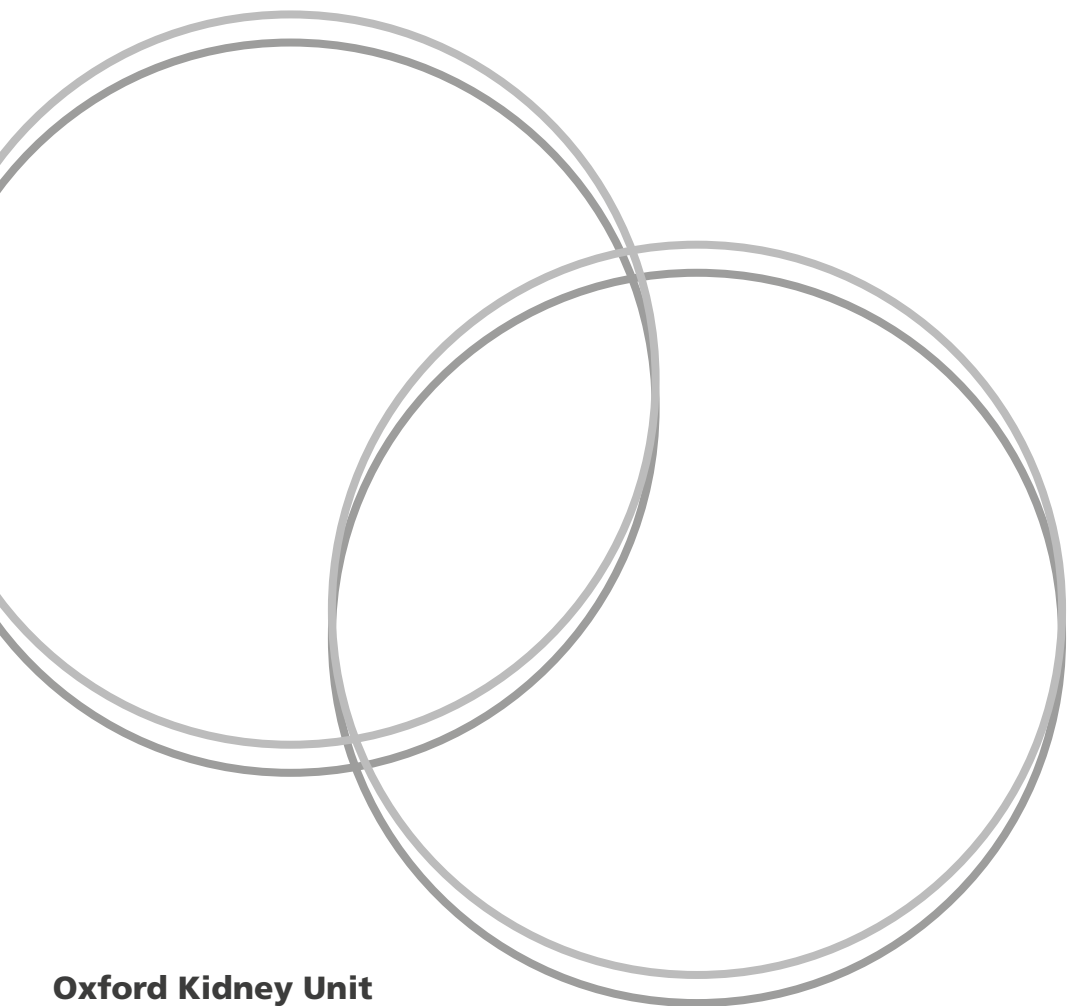


Renal: Reducing potassium in your diet

Information for patients



Introduction

Your kidney team have advised you to reduce the amount of potassium that you eat in your diet. This leaflet will give you information on how to do this and where to get further support.

What is potassium?

Potassium is a mineral found naturally in many foods. When working well, your kidneys are able to remove any extra potassium from your blood. However, when they are not working properly, it can lead to a build-up of potassium in your blood.

You may not have any symptoms of a high potassium. However, it still needs to be treated, as a high level of potassium in your blood increases the risk of your heart beating abnormally, which can be life threatening.

What should my potassium level be?

Your kidney team will check your potassium level every time you have a blood test. Target potassium levels are:

- 3.5 to 5.5 mmol/l for someone with chronic kidney disease and not on dialysis
- 3.5 to 6.0 mmol/l for someone on haemodialysis or peritoneal dialysis

What can I do to control my potassium level?

By reducing food and drink high in potassium, your level should come down to within a normal range. However, other factors, such as constipation and medications, can also cause your potassium level to rise. If you think that you may be suffering from constipation, please speak with your kidney team to discuss your diet and medications which can help with this.

How can I follow a low potassium diet?

The following information will help you choose food and drink that is lower in potassium. Whilst you do not need to completely remove all foods that are high in potassium from your diet, you should try to choose more options from the 'lower potassium alternatives' column and fewer from the 'high potassium foods' column.

Resources are also available for multicultural foods (African and Caribbean, Chinese and Far East, Eastern European, and South Asian.). Please speak to your dietitian if you require these (see page 16 for contact details).

Fruit and vegetables

Fruit and vegetables are a good source of fibre, vitamins and minerals. You should aim to have at least 5 portions of fruit and vegetables a day.

For the higher potassium foods, the dietitian will advise you on what you can eat. This will depend on your current dietary intake.

Fruit

Higher potassium foods	Lower potassium alternatives (1 piece each, unless otherwise stated)
Apricot Avocado Bananas Blackcurrants Cantaloupe/honeydew melon Coconut Figs Gooseberries Greengages Jack fruit Lychees Mango Orange Pomegranate Prunes Rhubarb Star fruit All dried fruit, e.g. raisin, sultanas, prunes, dates All fruit juices	Apple Blueberries (80g/handful) Cherries (80g/handful) Clementine/mandarin/satsuma/ tangerine Grapefruit (½)* Grapes (80g/handful) Kiwi (small) Peach/nectarine Pear Pineapple (1 slice) Plum (medium) Raspberries (80g/handful) Strawberries (80g/handful) Watermelon All tinned fruit (with juice or syrup drained off) *To be avoided with certain medications. Ask your pharmacist if unsure

Vegetables

All vegetables should be boiled, rather than steamed or microwaved. Boiling allows some of the potassium to leach into the water. This should be thrown away, not used for gravy or stock.

Vegetables can be blanched by boiling for approximately 1 minute, then draining before using in stir fries, casseroles, stews, curries and soups.

Higher potassium foods	Lower potassium alternatives (Portion sizes as below)
Artichoke Asparagus Aubergine Beetroot Broad beans Brussel sprouts Celery Okra (ladies fingers) Parsnips Spinach Dried vegetables The following can be used in small amounts as part of a dish: Mushrooms Onions/spring onions Sweetcorn Tomatoes (use to flavour) * *Using tinned tomatoes is a better option than fresh tomatoes, tomato puree, passata or jars of tomato sauce	Beansprouts (4 tablespoons) Broccoli (2 spears) Cabbage (2 handfuls) Carrots (3 tablespoons) Cauliflower (6 florets) Cress Cucumber (3cm) French beans (3 tablespoons) Lettuce (1 small bowl) Marrow (3 tablespoons) Olives (20) Peas, boiled (3 tablespoons) Peppers (capsicum) (½) Runner beans (3 tablespoons) Sugar snap peas / mangetout (3 tablespoons) Swede (3 tablespoons) Turnip (⅓) All tinned vegetables (with water drained off)

Carbohydrates

Carbohydrates, also known as starchy foods, are a good source of energy, fibre and vitamins.

Starchy root vegetables, such as potato, sweet potato, yam and cassava are high in potassium, so should be limited to one portion per day or less and should be boiled in plenty of water to reduce their potassium content. The water should be discarded after boiling and not used for soups, gravy or sauces.

Keeping the skins on potatoes provide a good source of fibre and B vitamins. However, if your potassium levels are consistently high, peel your potatoes before boiling to help further reduce the potassium content.

Other starchy foods based on wheat or rice are low in potassium and are good alternatives.

Carbohydrates

Higher potassium foods	Lower potassium alternatives
<p>Steamed, jacket or instant mashed potatoes</p> <p>Frozen, oven, microwave, chip shop chips</p> <p>Manufactured potato products, e.g. hash browns, potato waffles, potato wedges, frozen roast potatoes, potato croquettes</p> <p>Breads containing nuts, seeds, dried fruit</p> <p>Peshwari naan bread</p> <p>Poppadom (limit to 1)</p> <p>Cereals containing bran, dried fruit, nuts and chocolate, e.g. muesli, All Bran, Bran Buds, Sultana Bran, Weetos, Fruit and Fibre, Grape Nuts, Chocolate Crisps</p>	<p>150g (3 egg sized) boiled potato, sweet potato, yam, cassava, which can then be mashed, roasted or fried</p> <p>White or wholemeal bread or rolls</p> <p>Pitta bread, tortilla wraps</p> <p>English muffins, bagels, crumpets, croissants, pancakes</p> <p>Garlic bread</p> <p>Yorkshire pudding</p> <p>Rice/Pasta/Noodles</p> <p>Couscous/Polenta</p> <p>Plain, garlic or meat filled naan</p> <p>Chapati</p> <p>Sago, tapioca, semolina millet</p> <p>All flours, except potato flour</p> <p>Plain cereals, e.g. Weetabix, Shredded Wheat, Shreddies, cornflakes, Frosties, Special K, Rice Krispies, Cheerios, puffed wheat, honey puffs, Porridge</p>

Meat, fish and vegetarian alternatives

These foods are an important source of protein, which is necessary for growth and repair and the building and maintaining of muscle.

Higher potassium foods	Lower potassium alternatives
Nuts Seeds Dried pulses such as lentils, chickpeas and kidney beans Baked beans (if you do have these drain some of the excess sauce off) Jack fruit	Fresh meat & poultry Fresh fish and seafood Vegetarian & Vegan alternatives Eggs Quorn Soy protein (textured vegetable protein) Tofu Tinned pulses such as lentils, chickpeas and kidney beans

Dairy and non-dairy alternatives

Dairy products are a good source of protein and calcium which is important for bone health. However, some of these can be high in potassium, so you may want to opt for some suitable dairy alternatives, even if you only swap these some of the time.

Higher potassium foods	Lower potassium alternatives
Evaporated milk Condensed milk Milk powders (e.g. Marvel) Potato milk Barista style milk alternatives Enriched/fortified milk alternatives Coconut milk (beverage) with added coconut water Coconut milk (tinned) – often used in cooking	Cows, goats and lactose free milk (½ pint or 300ml a day). This includes whole, semi-skimmed and skimmed milk Unfortified/non barista style milk alternatives, including oat, soya, rice, almond, hemp, hazelnut and cashew nut milks Coconut milk (beverage) 125g pot of plain/fruit yogurt Crème fraiche Cream Soya yogurt

Sweet foods: Puddings, desserts, cakes, biscuits, sweets

Foods that are high in fat and sugar can be included in your diet in moderation. However, If you have diabetes, you may need to limit your intake of these.

Higher potassium foods	Lower potassium alternatives
<p>Those containing chocolate, cocoa, dried fruit, coconut or nuts, e.g. fruit cake, banana split, bread and butter pudding (unless containing very little dried fruit), banoffee pie, christmas pudding, chocolate cake, chocolate mousse, chocolate sauce</p> <p>Rhubarb pie/crumble</p> <p>Chocolate bars*, carob toffee, fudge liquorice</p> <p>Marzipan</p> <p>*If you would like some chocolate, opt for a chocolate-coated biscuit instead of a solid bar</p>	<p>Apple and berry pie/crumble</p> <p>Cheesecake</p> <p>Pavlova, meringue, trifle, jelly milk puddings, custard, mousse (non-chocolate)</p> <p>Victoria/madeira sponge, Swiss roll, plain scones, iced buns, jam tarts, doughnuts, Danish pastry/apple slice</p> <p>Plain biscuits (digestive, rich tea, Marie, etc.)</p> <p>Iced, cream or jam-filled biscuits, shortbread, wafers</p> <p>Boiled/chewy/jelly sweets, fruit pastilles</p> <p>Marshmallows, mints, candied popcorn</p> <p>Turkish delight (non-chocolate)</p>

Savoury snacks: crackers, crisps, nuts

Potato and root vegetable crisps are high in potassium, so it is better to have lower potassium alternatives.

Higher potassium foods	Lower potassium alternatives
Potato crisps (fried, puffed and baked) Root vegetable crisps (e.g. parsnip and beetroot) Lentil crisps Nuts Seeds	Corn/maize/tapioca snacks, e.g. tortilla chips, Monster munch, Wotsits Rice snacks, e.g. Snack-a-jacks, rice cakes Wheat snacks Popcorn, pretzels, breadsticks Cream crackers, crispbreads, water biscuits NB: Some products will use potassium chloride instead of standard salt, so it is important to check the ingredients. Try to limit these to 2 packs/week

Beverages

Higher potassium drinks	Lower potassium alternatives
<p>Coffee</p> <p>Fruit and vegetable juices, smoothies, Ribena, hi-juice squashes</p> <p>Drinking chocolate, Bovril, Complan/ Meritene</p> <p>Barista style milk alternatives</p> <p>Coconut water</p> <p>Beer, lager, cider,</p> <p>Sherry, Port</p> <p>Vermouth Wine/champagne</p>	<p>Water</p> <p>Camp coffee</p> <p>1 weak cup of coffee a day</p> <p>Tea (black and fruit tea)</p> <p>Squash/cordial</p> <p>Fizzy soft drinks (lemonade, Lucozade)</p> <p>Ginger beer</p> <p>Tonic water, soda water</p> <p>Spirits (e.g. gin, whiskey, brandy, vodka)</p>

Seasonings, spreads/butter, sauces

Higher potassium foods	Lower potassium alternatives
<p>Black treacle Peanut butter Chocolate spread Brown sauce and tomato ketchup Tomato puree, passata Marmite/Bovril/Oxo/Vegemite/yeast extract</p> <p>Salt substitutes contain potassium instead of sodium, so it is important these are avoided:</p> <p>Lo-Salt, So-Lo, low sodium salt</p>	<p>Butter and vegetable spread All herbs and spices Pepper All chilli sauces, curry powder Garlic Vinegar Mayonnaise/salad cream Mustard, mint sauce, apple sauce Pickle Gravy granules/powder Jam/marmalade Honey, lemon curd</p>

Cooking tips

Using vegetables in your meals

When making dishes such as stir fries, stews, curries and pies, you can use a mixture of lower potassium vegetables with a small amount of onion and mushrooms. Blanching your vegetables in boiling water for 1 minute before using in cooking will also help reduce the potassium content.

Pasta sauce

If making a tomato-based sauce use tinned tomatoes rather than tomato paste, puree or passata. Flavour the sauce with garlic and herbs as well as lower potassium vegetables (see page 6).

Soup

Packet and tinned soups are high in salt and potassium. To reduce the salt and potassium content you could make your own.

Stocks and gravy

Make a meat or chicken stock or use a ready-made low salt stock, such as Kallo or baby food stock cubes. You can use rice, barley or mini pasta shapes to give it body and cornflour can be used to thicken. Choose lower potassium vegetables (see page 6), blanch them and drain before adding to the stock. Flavour with black pepper and herbs.

Eating out

You can still enjoy eating out, although you may need to plan ahead. For more information, please ask for a copy of our leaflet 'Eating out advice for people following a renal diet'.

How can I contact a dietitian?

Please be aware we can only provide advice or information if we care for you under the Oxford Kidney or Transplant Unit (Churchill Hospital).

This includes the network units at Banbury, High Wycombe, Milton Keynes, Stoke Mandeville and Swindon (Great Western Hospital).

If you do not attend these sites, please contact your local care team for support.

Oxford Renal Dietitians

Telephone: **01865 225 061**
(8.00am to 4.30pm, Monday to Friday)

Please leave a message on the answerphone and a dietitian will call you back the next working day.

Oxford Renal Clinics

If you are seeing a kidney doctor, the dietitians are available in the Renal Outpatient clinic at the Churchill Hospital each morning.

Please speak to the receptionist if you would like to be seen.

Renal Satellite/Network Unit Clinics

Some of these clinics are covered by a dietitian. Please ask the receptionist if you would like to be seen.

Renal Pharmacists

Churchill Hospital

Telephone: **01865 226 105**

Email: orh-tr.oxfordrenalpharmacy@nhs.net

9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday

(Please leave a message on the answerphone)

Useful information

Oxford Kidney Unit

Useful information about the Oxford Kidney Unit for patients and relatives.

Website: www.ouh.nhs.uk/oku

Further information

If you would like an interpreter, please speak to the department where you are being seen.

Please also tell them if you would like this information in another format, such as:

- Easy Read
- large print
- braille
- audio
- electronic
- another language.

We have tried to make the information in this leaflet meet your needs. If it does not meet your individual needs or situation, please speak to your healthcare team. They are happy to help.

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Oxford University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust
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